

# voice

vocational rehabilitation ■ disability determinations ■ independent living ■ personal care assistance

## Medical Consultants Cramer and Proctor Retire From DD

**D**rs. Quentin Cramer and Donald Proctor have many things in common. Both men are medical doctors who started out wanting to be engineers. Both men are World War II veterans. Both men have had their own private practices. Both men have worked as medical consultants for Disability Determinations (DD) and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). Both men retired from DD in June. And, both men will be missed by all. Though they are only two, they have done much for many. The following stories will tell you about these men and their fascinating lives.

— story by *Lisa Sone*

### Quentin Cramer, M.D.

**W**hen asked what he most enjoyed about working in the Kansas City DD office, Quentin Cramer replies: "I enjoy all the counselors. They are my kids. I have learned as much from them as they have learned from me." Cramer announced his retirement in June after 38 years as a medical consultant for the Division.

In 1954, Cramer began consulting part-time for both DD and VR while maintaining a full-time internal medicine and rheumatology practice in Kansas City, Mo. Even after he left private practice in 1966, Cramer continued to work

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Cotter Brown (right), assistant district supervisor in the Kansas City DD office, presents Quentin Cramer with a clock from the local Missouri Association of Disability Examiners (MADE) chapter at his retirement party.





**by Ronald W. Vessell**

*Assistant Commissioner*

*Division of Vocational  
Rehabilitation*

*Department of Elementary  
and Secondary Education*

# Opportunities Will Come During Next Federal Year

**A**s we approach the end of another federal year, our Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and Disability Determinations (DD) programs are hopeful of putting some old challenges behind them and of preparing for new ones.

DD has endured a year-long hiring freeze by SSA. Fortunately, we managed to continue our history of high-quality performance with regard to net accuracy and timeliness.

VR has handled back-to-back record years of new applicants with impressive employment numbers to show for it. Unfortunately, these numbers of applicants also led to record costs, thereby creating a waiting list for services.

Self-directed Personal Care Assistance continues to be a popular choice among Medicaid recipients in need of services. The per-person cost of services dropped to 47 percent of the nursing home cap. However, the number of new persons entering the program grew unexpectedly from 118 to 140 persons per month.

Centers for Independent Living maintained their state funding in the toughest of budget years.

With all the challenges of last year, this coming year will carry its share of opportunities. Opportunities for demonstrating the ability of the VR program to produce more successful, competitive employments for a third straight year in a tough economic environment will continue to raise the eyebrows of some

decision makers. DD will continue to experience changes in the disability process as SSA begins to identify "Quick Decisions" and centralize medical consultation around clinical specialties. Personal Care Assistance will attempt to share program efficiencies with other in-home programs and continue to solidify self-direction as a cost-effective alternative to traditional models.

I have shared that it is time for someone new to lead the way in meeting the many challenges and opportunities that lie ahead of our programs. Dr. Jeanne Loyd is an outstanding choice for this task, and you are an outstanding staff.

As I end my almost 28 years with VR, I know that the Division programs will continue to improve service to our citizens with disabilities. While I will replace one set of duties with another, I will not be able to replace the people who work in our many disability programs. You are truly an example for all of government. I look forward to learning of the Division's receipt of the Missouri Quality Award in the next few years. (For more information, see page 12.)

Finally, it is with a great deal of gratitude for your cooperation and hard work in the service of others that I say "thank-you." I wish each of you all the best in the future.



Ronald W. Vessell

The VR Voice is your voice. Please tell us how your newsletter can best serve you. What would you like to see in upcoming issues? Call Lisa Sone at (573) 526-7063; e-mail her at [lsone@vr.dese.state.mo.us](mailto:lsone@vr.dese.state.mo.us); or mail your ideas/comments to her attention at the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, 3024 Dupont Circle, Jefferson City, MO 65109.

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for DD and VR until 1970. Cramer has not only worked with Missouri's vocational rehabilitation program, he has also worked with the federal program. Upon leaving private practice, he became the federal regional medical officer working with the Rehab Institute and federal grant programs and running workshops. During the same year he became the head of the Public Health Unit for all federal offices in the Kansas City region. He retired from this position after 15 years and returned home to DD where he again worked with his "kids" until June of this year.

Cramer originally started out pursuing a career as a chemical engineer. After high school graduation, he began summer courses at the University of Missouri-Rolla where his father was the dean of the school of education. He amassed hours and hours in chemistry. However, at 19, he began a summer job with an older doctor at the local hospital. He gained hands-on medical experience performing surgical procedures with the doctor. It was then that he knew medicine was his future.

Cramer then headed for the University of Kansas (KU) Medical Center — he was the only out-of-state student. It was there that he met his wife, Esther. In 1943, they both graduated, she with a nursing degree and he with a medical degree. They left for the University of Southern California for his internship.

During Cramer's pursuit of his medical education, major events in history unfolded. World War II raged on. Drafted during his sophomore year in college, Cramer was allowed to finish medical school and his internship because he was needed for medical support for the troops. Two weeks after D-Day, Cramer was commissioned as a 2nd lieutenant in the medical corps. He left for Europe in December 1944.

Cramer spent three years in the service as a medic traveling central Europe. The medics manned battalion aid stations that were kept one to two miles behind the front lines. He remembers having to paint white over the red crosses that identified them as medics because the Germans targeted them to kill.

Cramer recalls an incident when the tables were turned and the medics were in the position as captors.

"We had set up an aid station in a Catholic church, not knowing there were injured Germans in the loft," says Cramer. "We captured and treated them and sent them back to the U.S. medical units."

Recently, Cramer was interviewed by a New York television station regarding a Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) airing of a documentary exposing the brutal and inhuman treatment of American prisoners of war (POWs) in World War II. Some 350 American POWs identified as Jewish by the Germans were sent to a slave labor camp considered to be a satellite of the Buchenwald concentration camp in the German village Berga. When the POWs from Berga were liberated in April 1945, Cramer



Cramer spent 38 years as a medical consultant in the Vocational Rehabilitation Division. He and his wife of 60 years, Esther (right), have many plans for his retirement.

was in the medical unit that was first to aid the surviving soldiers near Cham in southeastern Germany. Less than 200 POWs survived the brutal working conditions, starvation, and disease that stole the lives of so many. After Cham, Cramer went to the Mauthausen concentration camp near Linz in Austria. By now the war had ended. Cramer spent his final year of duty cleaning up the concentration camps and working in a 150-bed hospital for displaced persons.

Cramer returned to the U.S. in 1947 and began his residency around the Lebanon, Mo., and Camdenton, Mo., areas. He opened a private practice in Kansas City, Mo., in 1952. Throughout the course of his medical career, Cramer was on staff at Truman Medical Center where he was the director of the arthritis clinic for 15 years. He also taught at KU over a span of 50 years.

This fall, Cramer will attend the 60-year reunion of his medical class from KU. He recently celebrated his 60th wedding anniversary with his wife, Esther, who has encouraged him to retire. He plans to work on his "honey-do" list and fish at Truman Lake.

Cramer takes with him the 40-pound striped bass that has adorned his office for years. The mounted fish has been a great attraction for his "little friends," the children of counselors who have stopped by to visit. But more important, he takes with him 38 years of memories of his "kids." He is proud of the counselors and says that they are "good students of medicine."

"The kids have been wonderful to me," he says. "I will miss them all." ◀

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## Donald C. Proctor, M.D.

Since 1992, Donald C. Proctor has been a medical consultant in the Jefferson City DD office. Proctor has determined thousands of claims for Social Security Disability benefits. Respected by his fellow consultants and counselors, Proctor will be missed by many.

"Dr. Proctor has a real compassion for people," says Wayne Gillam, director of claimant services for DD. "He has a unique way of weaving his medical experience, the medical in the charts, and the claimants' allegations into an assessment that gives credibility to pain. Coupled with his gentle personality and great sense of humor, Proctor has been a real asset to the Jefferson City Disability Office and the Social Security Disability Program."

Staff will miss this soft-spoken gentleman whose kindness has touched the office and the claimants he has helped. Helping people is not a choice for Proctor. It is something that comes from within — a genuine desire to do what's right and best for people.

Proctor started out as a numbers man intrigued by mathematics. Although he wanted to be an engineer, fate would change his course. A high school graduate when World War II broke out, he did what was in his nature. He volunteered for service in January 1943. He served his country in the U.S. Army Air Corps.

Before leaving the U.S., Proctor was trained as a meteorologist at the University of Chicago. Flying in B-25s through storms and weather fronts, he charted weather maps to ensure safe travel conditions for the troops in Europe.

But Proctor doesn't remember anyone being afraid. "We were just so young that it didn't occur to us," he says. Their missions were dangerous. They survived lightning strikes and the fury of nature. Upon returning to the U.S. after the war, his corps was one of the first to ever

Donald Proctor spent 11 years as a medical consultant in the Jefferson City DD office. Proctor says he now considers himself retired, but he will still work as a medical consultant in the Sedalia VR office and serve as a member of the Bothwell Regional Health Center hospital board.

fly through a hurricane, which earned them an air medal.

Proctor's family had been Boone County natives since the early 1800s. When he returned from the war in 1947, he went to the University of Missouri–Columbia and received an A.B./B.S. in natural sciences and medicine. Proctor transferred to Washington University in St. Louis for his medical degree.

After an internship and residency in Oklahoma, he returned to Missouri and settled in Sedalia. He opened a general practice in 1953 and maintained it until he retired in 1989.

Proctor does miss his general practice days. He performed countless surgeries and delivered countless babies.

"When you deliver babies, you get to know the families," says Proctor. "Medicine is not as personal as it was at one time. Lawsuits have affected the practice — and not for the good. I think there is a great lack of interpersonal interaction between patients and doctors these days."

When Proctor practiced, he never had the luxury of regular hours. He was always on call. If a patient required treatment at the emergency room (ER), Proctor went to the hospital. In its early days, Sedalia's Bothwell Hospital did not have ER doctors, so the treating physician went to the ER when a patient was in need. Proctor made house calls, even outside of Sedalia.

"I took telephone calls day and night and didn't charge for them," he says. "I was always in the office much later than 5 p.m. and never home on time, ever. It was hard on my family," says Proctor, who with his wife, Janet, has 11 children. "If I had it to do over again, I'd have a more orderly life with more regular hours."

Both the medical and educational communities have benefited from Proctor's expertise. He was one of the original members of the board of trustees for State Fair Community College in Sedalia from 1968 to 2002. During his last 12 years on the board, he served as president. Before he retired from the board, the college honored him by naming its library the Donald C. Proctor Library. Proctor was also named Man of the Year by the Missouri Association of Junior Colleges in the mid-'90s.

For the most part, Proctor says he considers himself retired, but he intends to continue working as a medical consultant for the Sedalia VR office. He will also remain a member of the hospital board of the Bothwell Regional Health Center as he has for the past 10 years.

"I enjoyed medicine," Proctor says when pondering retirement. "It has been a great challenge, but you never know it all. The sooner you realize that, the better off you'll be." ◀



## Employee Changes — June through August 2003

### New Hires:

**Kathy Burleson**, a Billing Specialist I in the Columbia VR office.

**Kimberly Conrad**, a Counselor in the Springfield North VR office.

**Christy Coons**, a Secretary I in the Hannibal VR office.

**Hope Crumley**, a Counselor in the Farmington VR office.

**Barbara Fast**, a Counselor in the Cape Girardeau VR office.

**Chad Jones**, a Counselor in the Kirksville VR office.

**Elizabeth Smith**, a Secretary I in the Springfield South VR office.

**Matthew Staples**, a Counselor in the Sedalia VR office.

**Jay Mendell**, a Counselor in the St. Louis West VR office, to Senior Counselor.

**Pam Robertson**, a Computer Information Technician (CIT) Trainee in the Kansas City DD office, to CIT I.

**Starla Starke**, a Counselor in the Columbia VR office, to Senior Counselor.

**Elizabeth Todt**, a Counselor in the Cape Girardeau VR office, to Senior Counselor.

**Michele Van Wechel**, a Secretary II in the Jefferson City DD office, to Secretary III.

The following DD Counselors have been promoted to Senior Counselor:

**Anne Branscum**, Cape Girardeau

**Anita Branum**, Jefferson City

**Scott Crane**, Jefferson City

**Beverly Dotson**, Florissant

**Susan Henry**, Springfield

**Salvador Irizarry**, Springfield

**Evie Knapp**, Jefferson City

**Rebecca LaMar**, Cape Girardeau

**Rachel Manning**, Florissant

**Sheila Oligschlaeger**, Jefferson City

**Christy Parker**, Cape Girardeau

**Allison Rubin**, St. Louis South

**Tass Webber**, Jefferson City

**Brenda Whitt**, Jefferson City

**Stacy Duncan**, a Senior Counselor in the Springfield South VR office.

**Toni Kueffer**, a Computer Information Technician I in Central Office VR.

**Robert Lappin**, a Senior Counselor in the St. Louis Transition VR office.

**Yvette Moyers**, a Senior Counselor in the Farmington VR office.

**Teresa Petty**, a Billing Specialist II in Central Office VR.

**Daniel Schulte**, a Senior Counselor in the St. Louis South DD office.

### Retirements:

**Elector Anthony**, a Senior Counselor in the Kansas City Downtown office, retired Aug. 31 with more than 23 years of service.

**Mike Burch**, a District Supervisor in the Farmington VR office, retired Aug. 31 after more than 22 years.

**Carol Drennen**, a Secretary II in the Springfield DD office, retired July 31 with more than eight years of service.

**Bette Evans-Vint**, a Senior Counselor in the St. Louis West VR office, retired Aug. 31 after almost 30 years.

**Jerry Ferguson**, a Mail Service Specialist I at Central Office, retired with two years of service.

**Joyce Johnson**, a Billing Specialist II in the Cape Girardeau DD office, retired after almost 33 years.

**Margie Kiesling**, a Secretary III in the Jefferson City DD office, retired Aug. 31 after 31 years of service.

**Karen Mosley-Pitts**, a Secretary III in the St. Louis West office, retired Aug. 31 with more than 32 years of service.

### Transfers:

**Rebecca Shipley**, a Billing Specialist II transferred to a Secretary III in the Springfield South VR office.

**Cody Thomas**, a VR Counselor in the Farmington office transferred to the St. Louis Transition office.

### Promotions:

**Alecia Ahart Latz**, an Assistant District Supervisor in the Springfield DD office, to District Supervisor.

**Penni Bartram**, a Secretary II in the St. Joseph VR office, to Secretary III.

**Faith Fritz**, a Counselor in the St. Joseph VR office, to Senior Counselor.

**Sue Hanes**, a Secretary in the Columbia VR office, to Secretary III.

**Carol McGeorge**, a Counselor in the Columbia VR office, to Senior Counselor.

### Resignations:

**Jeri Bohnert**, a QA Specialist in the Cape Girardeau DD office.

**James Clark**, a VR Counselor in the Kansas City Transition office.

**Ernest Day**, a Secretary II in the St. Louis Downtown VR office.

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In this section, consumers, partners/suppliers and division employees can voice their opinions, views or recognition of our division and staff. Some letters will be printed in their entirety while longer letters might only have excerpts printed. Consumers' names are omitted to protect their confidentiality. All letters are subject to editing.

**Comments from a telephone call that Lora Coffman, assistant district supervisor in the Kansas City DD office, received from a consumer regarding Tonia Thiel:**

"[Tonia] worked so hard on my behalf. She was patient and kind and a wonderful listener." The consumer went on to say: "I have nothing but exemplary things to say about her, and I want her to be recognized for all of her work."

***Tonia Thiel is a senior counselor in the Kansas City DD office.***

**Dear Mr. Cook (director of operations, Central Office VR),**

I would like to convey words of thank you for Mr. Neil Harms' visit to Tipton Correctional Center. His presentation was very beneficial to the inmate population and informative to all. Mr. Harms took

the time to answer questions from the attendees and is a true credit to his department.

**Sincerely,  
Paul Madden, Academic Teacher III  
ES/LS**

***Neil Harms is the district supervisor of the Jefferson City VR office.***

**Raymond Drake:**

The other day I was thinking of how much I enjoy my career as a biomedical electronics technician. I've been at it for nine years and still enjoy it. I started at the VA medical center in Kansas City, Mo., after finishing my schooling. I then took a transfer to the VA medical center in Minneapolis, Minn. Every once in awhile, my responsibilities require me to supervise rehab veterans in various work programs, and those are the times I am reminded of the road I have traveled. I want to thank you and the Missouri work rehab program for providing me with the means to attend Longview Community College and Johnson Community College and to receive an A.S. in biomedical technologies. Thanks.

***Raymond Drake is the district supervisor of the Nevada VR office.***

**Excerpts from a letter from an Independent Living consumer:**

In the spring of 1998, I lost the ability to work at the federal government agency where I had worked since 1980.

I was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 1992. It had progressed to the point that it affected my ability to do my job.

I went through denial and depression. My family situation seemed desperate. I had a reasonably good disability pension once it got started. Still, I felt I could contribute to someone's workforce.

A referral led me to a second referral, which led me to On My Own, Inc. I am very thankful someone cared to make that first referral.

I received a ramp for my scooter and a home modification that included the widening of an entry doorway and grab bars in the bathroom. I am very thankful for the assistance that probably changed my life from depressed to determined.

I am now employed by On My Own, Inc., as an independent living specialist. I am very appreciative for the opportunity to help others and be able to make a referral that could improve their life like someone did for me.

## Motion of our agency *continued*

**John Outtz**, the District Supervisor of the Florissant DD office, retired July 31 with close to 30 years of service.

**Otis Pitts**, the District Supervisor of the St. Charles VR office, retired Aug. 31 with 30 years of service.

**Nancy Reys**, a Secretary III in the St. Joseph VR office, retired June 30 with almost 34 years of service.

**Pat Rothove**, a Billing Specialist II in Central Office DD, retired Aug. 31 after more than 31 years of service.

**Guy Schnitzler**, a QA Specialist in the Jefferson City DD office, retired Aug. 31 after almost 29 years.

**Mark Schroer**, a Senior Counselor in the St. Louis South VR office, retired July 31 after more than 27 years.

**Bob Smith**, a Counselor in the Kansas City Downtown VR office, retired after 21 years of service.

**Linda Tobaben**, a Senior Counselor in the Kansas City DD office, retired Aug. 31 after more than 23 years.

**Nancy Upschulte**, a Billing Specialist II in Central Office VR, retired June 30 with almost 26 years of service.

**Kay Welch**, a Secretary II in the Sedalia VR office, retired June 30 with more than 28 years of service.

**Don (Ray) Wilson**, a Senior Counselor in the Cape Girardeau VR office, retired June 30 after 37 years.

# VR Mentor Training Program

A new Mentor Training Program has been developed by the VR Capacity Team. The program pairs experienced VR counselors with new counselors and provides the following benefits: 1) new counselors receive more nurturing one-on-one training; 2) the experienced counselor's knowledge expands and is reinforced; and 3) the overall learning environment is enhanced.

Experienced counselors can volunteer to be mentors. They will receive a certificate upon program completion. Supervisors then assign new counselors to mentors. After mentoring for one year, the mentor will receive \$250.

New counselors participating in the program receive one year of formal training with a mentor and a second year of informal mentor training. After successfully completing two years of the Mentor Training Program, new counselors will receive a certificate of completion.

One mentoring pair, made up of new counselor Michael Metz and senior counselor Andrea Swope, has been established in the Springfield South VR office. This "pilot" team will be evaluated for program effectiveness before the program opens to other mentor teams in both VR and DD.

Congratulations to the following VR mentors who have successfully completed their training:

Maureen Alexander	Regional Manager	Kansas City West Regional
Larry Allen	District Supervisor	Kansas City Downtown
James Ankrom	District Supervisor	Kansas City North
John Arellin	Senior Counselor	St. Joseph
Amy Bowen	Senior Counselor	Columbia
Debbi Browne	Senior Counselor	Cape Girardeau
Kristi Bruning	Assistant District Supervisor	Springfield North
Karla Bunch	Assistant District Supervisor	Joplin
Mike Burch	District Supervisor	Farmington
Joyce Christopher	Senior Counselor	West Plains
Kelly Cook	Senior Counselor	Columbia
Michael Cook	Director, Operations	Central
Jackie Crawford	Senior Counselor	Springfield South
Raymond Drake	District Supervisor	Nevada
Stacy Duncan	Senior Counselor	Springfield South
Toby Eckert	District Supervisor	St. Louis West
Timothy Gaines	Coordinator, Development and Consumer Affairs	Central
Carol Gamm-Smith	Senior Counselor	Jefferson City
Leslie Garcia	Regional Manager	St. Louis West
Anita Harms	Senior Counselor	Kansas City East
Neil Harms	District Supervisor	Jefferson City
Kelly Harden	Senior Counselor	Kansas City Transition
James Higgins	District Supervisor	Kirksville
Barb Hirst	Senior Counselor	St. Louis Southwest
Barb Hoelzer	District Supervisor	St. Louis Southwest
Chris Howrey	Senior Counselor	St. Charles

Gwen Jackson	Senior Counselor	West Plains
Tamara Jaekels	Senior Counselor	Kansas City Transition
Kathy Kelly	Senior Counselor	Jefferson City
Charles Kimberlin	District Supervisor	West Plains
Denise Kinkad	Senior Counselor	Kansas City North
Karen Klenke	District Supervisor	St. Louis South
Donna Knodell	District Supervisor	Poplar Bluff
Catherine Knowlton	Senior Counselor	Kansas City East
Judy Kozeny	Senior Counselor	St. Louis Southwest
Rebecca Largent	Assistant District Supervisor	Columbia
Tony Logan	District Supervisor/Regional Manager	Joplin
Sharon Loveland	Senior Counselor	Sedalia
Rebecca Massey	Senior Counselor	Joplin
DeeAnn McCormack	Assistant District Supervisor	Jefferson City
Louella McNeill	Senior Counselor	Farmington
Debra Merrell	Senior Counselor	Rolla
Anita Michel	District Supervisor	Springfield North
Janis Miller	District Supervisor	St. Louis Transition
Lisa Miller	Senior Counselor	Columbia
Jo Moncrief	District Supervisor	Hannibal
Shelley Morse	Senior Counselor	Columbia
Ron Parker	District Supervisor	Cape Girardeau
Otis Pitts	District Supervisor	St. Charles
Elaine Platz	Senior Counselor	Springfield South
Joan Read	Senior Counselor	Columbia
Jay Robertson	District Supervisor	Kansas City East
Leah Rowe	Senior Counselor	Kansas City North
John Ryan	District Supervisor	Kansas City South
Janet Schroeder	Senior Counselor	Cape Girardeau
Catherine Seeley	Senior Counselor	Sedalia
Delores Sehorn	Senior Counselor	Kansas City North
Wanda Shull	Senior Counselor	Joplin
Duane Shumate	District Supervisor	Columbia
Brenda Simmons	District Supervisor	Kansas City Transition
Jesse Sitzes	District Supervisor	Farmington
Jeather Smith	District Supervisor	St. Louis Downtown
Robyn Smith	Senior Counselor	Rolla
Melissa Steele-Lufcy	District Supervisor	Springfield South
Danny Stephens	Regional Manager	St. Louis West
Rosalee Suchsland	Senior Counselor	Chillicothe
Andrea Swope	Senior Counselor	Springfield South
Jackie Thomas	Senior Counselor	Springfield South
Sam Townsend	District Supervisor	St. Louis North
Clarinda Unger	Coordinator, Client Services	Central
Laura Wallen	Senior Counselor	Sedalia
Sandy Weitkamp	Senior Counselor	St. Charles
Kim Wennermark	Senior Counselor	Rolla
Clarissa White	District Supervisor	Rolla
Darrell Wilson	Senior Counselor	Joplin
Karen Wilson-Cave	District Supervisor	Sedalia
Marva Wright	Senior Counselor	St. Louis North
Yvonne Wright	District Supervisor	St. Joseph
Rob Zirfas	District Supervisor	Chillicothe

# St. Louis Office Hosts 2003 Missouri Association of Disability Examiners (MADE) Training Conference

**T**he St. Louis DD office was host to the 2003 Missouri Association of Disability Examiners (MADE) Training Conference. From Aug. 6 through 8, MADE members from across the state met at the Union Station Hampton Inn in St. Louis, Mo. There members listened to and learned from a variety of speakers.

Eunice Harris, DDS administrator, gave the "State of the State" address, and Cheryl Ritter, director of program operations for Social Security, explained Social Security Administration's (SSA) Mission Statement and complimented the Missouri DDS program as "a leader in the disability process." Educational sessions were held on subjects such as AIDS, organ donation and transplants, cancer, the medical history of St. Louis, and violence in the workplace.

During the awards luncheon, Cheryl Ritter presented numerous DD employees, who are listed below, with SSA awards. Congratulations to all award recipients. Undoubtedly, Missouri DDS will continue as a leader in the disability process.

- ▶ The Regional Commissioner's Citation is the highest honor award for DD's SSA region. The award is in recognition of employees and others who have made superior contributions to SSA. Recipients were:  
**Martin Isenberg**, Ph.D., Medical Consultant, Kansas City DD office  
**Tamara Kastanas**, Senior Counselor, St. Louis South DD office  
**Rose Mary Oxley**, Hearing Officer, Cape Girardeau DD office  
**Pamela Robertson**, Computer Information Technician I, Kansas City DD office
- ▶ The Regional Commissioner's Team Award is in recognition of the "team approach" to carrying out or supporting SSA's mission of providing world-class service.  
 The award went to the following members of the Modernized Integrated Disability Adjudication System (MIDAS) Team:  
**Brad Bledsoe**, Senior Counselor, Jefferson City DD office  
**Lori Lane**, Computer Information Technician II, Jefferson City DD office  
**Debbie Moad**, Administrative Assistant I, Jefferson City DD office
- ▶ The Regional Commissioner's Quality Service Award is

in recognition of outstanding employee achievements in the areas of communications and service delivery.

The recipients were:

**Kathleen Madsen**, Quality Assurance Specialist, Kansas City DD office

The members of the Medical Evidence of Record (MER) Project Workgroup, who are:

**Sheila Beggs**, Hearing Officer, Cape Girardeau DD office

**Sahar Dorris**, Professional Relations Officer, Cape Girardeau DD office

**Angela Green**, Senior Counselor, Jefferson City DD office

**Jan Harrison**, Professional Relations Officer, Jefferson City DD office

**Donna Hilton**, Professional Relations Officer, Springfield DD office

**Lecia Mikle**, Assistant District Supervisor, Kansas City DD office

**John Outtz**, retired District Supervisor, Florissant DD office

**Loretta Price**, Professional Relations Officer, Florissant DD office

**Kelly Schlegel**, Senior Counselor, St. Louis South office

**Donna Schudy**, Secretary III, Springfield DD office

**Lisa Sone**, Quality Manager, Central Office VR



Eunice Harris, DDS administrator, gives the "State of the State" address at the 2003 annual MADE Training Conference held at the Union Station Hampton Inn in St. Louis, Mo.



## Service Awards

We are fortunate to have so many talented and inspirational co-workers. Please take a moment to recognize and congratulate the following staff for years of dedicated service to our division.

### Five Years

**Sharon Adam**, Secretary II — Springfield DD office

**Amy Bowen**, Senior Counselor — Columbia VR office

**Nell Branson**, Secretary III — Kansas City North VR office

**Angela Freeman**, Senior Counselor — Springfield DD office

**Steven Fritts**, Senior Counselor — Springfield North VR office

**Melissa Gentry**, Secretary III — Kansas City East VR office

**Brooke Hampton**, Senior Counselor — Kansas City DD office

**Anita Harms**, Senior Counselor — Kansas City East VR office

**Marita Hoeder-Manion**, Senior Counselor — St. Louis West VR office

**Georgianne Huckfeldt**, Legal Counsel — Central Office VR

**Debbie Kassing**, Senior Counselor — Springfield DD office

**Melissa Kritzer**, Senior Counselor — Kansas City DD office

**John Kues**, Senior Counselor — Kirksville VR office

**Rick Longley**, Coordinator, Administrative Services — Central Office VR

**Kimberly MacDonald**, Senior Counselor — Florissant DD office

**Christine Muenks**, Senior Counselor — Springfield DD office

**Kirk Nadler**, Senior Counselor — Jefferson City VR office

**Lynn Norton**, Billing Specialist II — Kansas City DD office

**Casi Rehmeier**, Accounting Specialist I — Central Office VR

**Catherine Sifford**, Secretary II — Springfield DD office

**Andrea Swope**, Senior Counselor — Springfield South VR office

**Jane Woods**, Secretary II — Springfield DD office

### 10 Years

**Catherine Alexander**, Senior Counselor — Kansas City Downtown VR office

**Lori Bergman**, Billing Specialist II — Sedalia VR office

**Chandra Carter**, Computer Information Technician II — Florissant DD office

**Joyce Christopher**, Senior Counselor — West Plains VR office

**Kelly Cook**, Senior Counselor — Columbia VR office

**Nancy Dunlap**, Senior Counselor — St. Louis DD office

**Barbara Gahagan**, Secretary II — Jefferson City VR office

**Wendy Geels**, Hearing Officer — Kansas City DD office

**Neil Harms**, District Supervisor — Jefferson City VR office

**Joanna Jones**, Senior Counselor — Kansas City East VR office

**Denise Kinkead**, Senior Counselor — Kansas City North VR office

**Debra Merrell**, Senior Counselor — Rolla VR office

**Sandra Montgomery**, Secretary II — Rolla VR office

**Trini Moreno**, Secretary II — St. Joseph VR office

**Donald Pflieger Jr.**, Senior Counselor — St. Louis DD office

**Elaine Platz**, Senior Counselor, Springfield North VR office

**Stephanie Pressman**, Secretary II — Springfield VR office

**Myra Rackers**, District Supervisor — Jefferson City DD office

**Christine Robinson**, Senior Counselor — St. Louis West VR office

**Alice Ruth**, Secretary II — Jefferson City DD office

**Claudia Scheer**, Assistant Director of Training — Cape Girardeau DD office

**Duane Shumate**, District Supervisor — Columbia VR office

**Carol Tenholder**, Senior Counselor — Cape Girardeau DD office

**Kimberly Vaughn**, Senior Counselor — Springfield North VR office

**Sandra Weitkamp**, Senior Counselor — St. Charles VR office

**Mieka West**, Senior Counselor, Springfield North VR office

**Mary White**, Assistant District Supervisor — Cape Girardeau DD office

**Yvonne Wright**, District Supervisor — St. Joseph VR office

**Vivian Wydrzynski**, Intake Counselor — St. Louis North VR office

**Robert Zirfas**, District Supervisor — Chillicothe VR office

### 15 Years

**Melissa Eakens**, Secretary II — Cape Girardeau DD office

**Caroline Levy**, Senior Counselor — Columbia VR office

**Mary Mayberry**, Secretary II — Cape Girardeau DD office

**Abby Mobley**, Senior Counselor — St. Louis DD office

**Tom Sampson**, Senior Counselor — Hannibal VR office

## 20 Years

**Alecia Ahart Latz**, District Supervisor  
— Springfield DD office

**Jeri Bohnert**, Quality Assurance  
— Cape Girardeau DD office

**Tonya Fambro**, Assistant Director of  
PAS — Cape Girardeau VR office

**Timothy Gaines**, Coordinator,  
Development and Consumer Affairs  
— Central Office VR

**John Jamison**, Senior Counselor  
— Springfield North VR office

**Sharon Steward**, Senior Counselor  
— St. Louis South VR office

**Jeather Smith**, District Supervisor  
— St. Louis Downtown VR office

## 25 Years

**Brenda Hill-Grant**, Secretary III — St.  
Louis North VR office

**Ruth Hummel**, District Supervisor  
— Kansas City DD office

**Dale Kaiser**, Assistant Director  
— Central Office DD

**Judith Kozeny**, Senior Counselor  
— St. Louis Southwest VR office

**Tony Logan**, District Supervisor  
— Joplin VR office

## 30 Years

**Rebecca James**, Secretary III —  
Springfield DD office

**Vickie Mantle**, Computer  
Information Tech Specialist — Central  
Office VR

**Otis Pitts**, District Supervisor — St.  
Charles VR office

**Linda Robinson**, Computer  
Information Tech — Central Officer  
VR

**Patricia Rothove**, Billing Specialist II  
— Central Office DD

**Susan Specht**, Secretary II — St.  
Joseph VR office

## Staff Achievements

**Deanna Clarkson**, Senior Counselor  
in the St. Charles VR office, was  
chosen "Advocate of the Year" by  
Family Advocacy and Community  
Training (F.A.C.T.) of St. Charles  
County. Deanna was nominated by  
a parent involved in the program  
for her willingness to "go beyond a  
written job description."

**Denise Kinkead**, a Senior Counselor  
in the Kansas City North VR office,  
was awarded the "Counselor  
of the Year" award by Truman  
Employment Services of Kansas  
City. DuLane Gash, manager of

employment services at Truman,  
says Denise "is always on target with  
her recommendations and provides  
guidance not only to the clients but  
also to the staff."

**Scott Mantooth**, Assistant Director  
of Training and Personnel and  
Supervisor of Deaf Services in Central  
Office VR, presented at the St. Louis  
Chapter meeting of the American  
Deafness and Rehabilitation  
Association (ADARA) hosted by  
the St. Louis Transition VR office.  
Mantooth gave an overview of the  
VR services available for the deaf and  
hard of hearing in Missouri.

The following employees were  
honored in June at the annual Missouri  
Rehabilitation Association conference:

**Linda Frazier**, a Billing Specialist  
II in the West Plains VR office,  
received the Missouri Association of  
Rehabilitation Service Award.

**Tamara Jaekels**, a Senior Counselor  
in the Kansas City Transition VR  
office, received the "Counselor of the  
Year" award.

**Tony Logan**, District Supervisor of  
the Joplin VR office, received the  
"Administrator of the Year" award.

**Greg Solum**, Director of Community  
Resources in Central Office VR,  
received the Stevinson Award.

## In Remembrance

Recently, one of our fellow division co-workers passed away  
Unexpectedly. Creda Trumbo, Secretary III in the Jefferson City DD  
office, died July 6. Trumbo had worked for DD since July 1976. She was well-  
known for her selfless willingness to help others. She was truly devoted to  
her family, friends, and work. Her heart was open to all.

Trumbo is survived by her husband, Randy; her son, David, of the  
home; her daughter, Michelle Hale, of Jefferson City; and two grandchildren,  
Emilie and Logan Hale. Though her death is a sad loss to all who knew her,  
her smile will always be in our hearts.



## New TBI Peer-Support Group Meets in Rolla

Deb Merrell, senior counselor, recently started a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) peer-support group in the Rolla, Mo., area. Meetings are held once a month and are open to anyone who has suffered a TBI or acquired head injury. Families and significant others are also welcome.

The group offers support and information along with guest speakers. Neuropsychologist Dr. Brick Johnstone of Columbia has already spoken and continues to serve as a resource person to the group.

The group has been well-received, and more people are attending each month. Members of the community, such as law enforcement officers, are invited to receive education about people with TBI.

The peer-support group gathers the last Tuesday night of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the Christ Episcopal Church at 10th and Main in Rolla.

Congratulations to Deb Merrell and the Rolla office for a great community outreach program. Another fine example of making a positive difference through education and service.

## Cape Girardeau DDS Goes Live on Cable TV

On Oct. 2, representatives from the Cape Girardeau DD office appeared on a local access cable presentation of *Ask Your Doctor*. Sahar Dorris, professional relations officer in the Cape Girardeau office, has been working with the Cape Girardeau County Area Medical Society, which produces the weekly show.

Two staff members of the Cape Girardeau office, medical consultant Dr. Harold D. Ridings and assistant district supervisor Mary White, spoke on the program along with a representative from the Cape Girardeau Social Security office.

The discussion focused on the Social Security Administration/Disability Determinations program and the desire to establish an even stronger relationship with the medical community to better serve our consumers.

## Mission Champion Award Continues

Recommended by VR's Capacity Team, the Mission Champion Award recognizes exemplary employees who go above and beyond the agency's mission by performing outstanding service. The award is based upon the employee assisting other staff, consumers, and/or partners in exceeding the agency's mission in the areas of customer service, employment outcomes, case management, or other services as deemed appropriate by the employee's immediate supervisor.

Any employee is eligible to receive the award once a year regardless of length of service. Award winners receive two hours of administrative leave, and the assistant commissioner congratulates all recipients. All staff may make nominations via e-mail or letter to the nominee's immediate supervisor. The nomination should describe how the employee exceeded the agency's mission.

June		
Richard Allen	Senior Counselor	Springfield DD
Lois Bobbett	Senior Counselor	Springfield DD
Pam Chandler	Assistant District Supervisor	Springfield DD
Jilann Cummins	Senior Counselor	Florissant DD
Debbie Frawley	Secretary III	St. Louis Southwest VR
Jan Kobzej	Senior Counselor	St. Joseph VR
Nancy McCrory	Senior Counselor	St. Joseph VR
Lisa Miller	Senior Counselor	Columbia VR
Joan Read	Senior Counselor	Columbia VR
July		
Rob Lappin	Senior Counselor	St. Louis Transition VR
Jan Lewis	Secretary III	St. Louis Southwest DD
Debbie Lingle	Secretary II	St. Louis South VR
Norma Morgan	Secretary III	Florissant DD
Danielle Schultz	Assistant District Supervisor	St. Louis South DD
Martha Smith	Secretary II	St. Louis South DD
Elizabeth Tomes	Secretary II	St. Louis Transition VR
Melinda Trovillion	Secretary II	Cape Girardeau VR
August		
Maureen Alexander	Regional Manager	Kansas City East VR
Michelle Morrison	Senior Counselor	Cape Girardeau DD

# are we truly making a positive difference?

**T**he positive differences we make in the lives of Missouri citizens deserve recognition. So in the days to come, you will hear more about DVR's application for the Missouri Quality Award (MQA). This award is the highest form of recognition the state offers. It doesn't matter whether we win the award or not. It is through the application process that we learn to build on our strengths and find our opportunities for improvement.

Through this process, we will discover how leadership determines our strategic plan — a plan that benefits our internal consumers (us); our external consumers (our end customers that we serve); and our partners (the medical community, Social Security, Community Rehabilitation Providers, Supported Employment Service Providers and so many more). MQA offers us opportunities to look at the information we use to do our work and encourages us to change our work processes rather than try to change our employees. And in the end, we will have results that we can measure that will point out areas for improvement and our areas of strengths deserving of recognition.

What does our assistant commissioner hope to

The **VR Voice** is published three times a year by the Missouri Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, a division of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

**D. Kent King**, Commissioner of Education

**Ronald W. Vessell**, Assistant Commissioner,  
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

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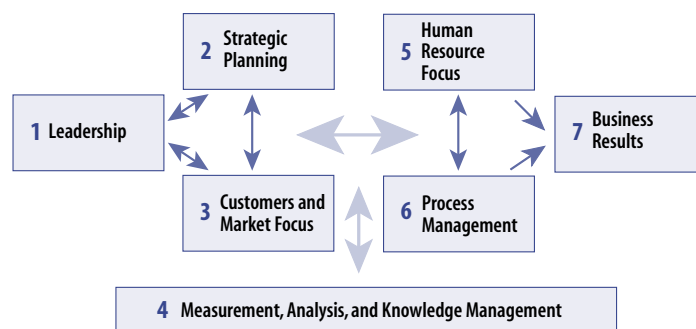
accomplish in our agency's application for the Missouri Quality Award? Our organization needs to "focus on continuous improvement," Ron Vessell says. He says we can improve some basic things in DVR's four core programs. For example, in the VR section he says, "We could improve results in all seven of the Standards and Indicators. A main focus should be on the improvement of our Customer Feedback System." He says an area to look at beyond the Standards and Indicators is the timeliness of our services. "We need to decrease the amount of time between application and services," he says.

Regarding DD, Vessell says, "We must maintain the minimum federal standards of timeliness and accuracy of disability decisions. Beyond the federal standards, we need to improve our Customer Feedback System." He would also like to evaluate DD's customer service — merely allowing claims is not the only way we can provide quality service.

Vessell envisions improving outcomes in the PAS and IL sections. He says, "We are in the process of defining what our outcomes should be and how to measure those outcomes. We know the outcome has to do with the amount of independence one has in life, but we are still gathering data on what and how to measure this."

As an organization whose mission statement is

## Missouri Quality Award Criteria Framework



The seven categories of the Missouri Quality Award define an organization, its operations, and its results.

to make a positive difference through education and service, it is a necessity to evaluate our performance. Are we truly making a positive difference? Using MQA as a performance model can help us answer that question, and it can guide us on our quest for continuous improvement.

— *by Lisa Sone*

Missouri Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education  
*Making a positive difference through education and service*